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Inside Outsourcing™



INTERVIEWED BY LARRY JANIS

Inside with:

Ron Walker, Vice President and Managing Director for EquaSiis Insights

EquaSiis provides software and services that improve the business support services lifecycle for shared services, outsourcing practitioners and service providers. The software, EquaSiis Workbench and EquaSiis Enterprise, is a framework for collaboration used during the service delivery assessment and sourcing process to assist in analysis and decision making for shared services or outsourcing. EquaSiis provides intelligence and optimization for the delivery of business support services across the entire organization. The company also offers service providers market intelligence, research, customer satisfaction and trending data through its Insights group.



FROM THE EDITOR

LJ: What are your new responsibilities at EquaSiis Insights?

RW: I'm the vice president and managing director for the Insights Practice for EquaSiis. EquaSiis is a new EquaTerra company formed in the fourth quarter of 2008 that has three main components.

Insights: Consulting and subscription based advisory, data and research services targeted at business and IT service providers as well as other related software and product vendors.

Enterprise: An integrated software platform leveraging Microsoft technologies to support both buyer and service provider efforts to source, manage and govern third party business and IT services, including shared services and captive operations.

Research: Standalone and integrated data and research products and services.

Insights offers a broad range of services organized into three main areas.

Strategic Initiatives

Sales and Marketing Effectiveness

Governance and Operational Effectiveness

Inside Outsourcing's goal is to provide you with articles of interest and with a forum for the exchange of information in this rapidly evolving industry.

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These offerings are designed specifically for business and IT service providers and we customize the solutions to fit unique client needs. It's not a one size fits all approach to the market like we're seeing from some other firms. It's also not just about data, but rather how to leverage market data, information and client experiences to improve providers' capabilities and the quality of the services they provide their clients. This includes a service provider version of EquaSiis Enterprise that enables providers to better manage their portfolio of clients across various dimensions like compliance and relationship management.

EquaSiis Insights and EquaSiis Research also conducts and manages an ongoing market research program that assesses leading ITO and BPO service providers performance and buyer satisfaction levels. This program was originally started in Europe by Morgan Chambers, the leading European ITO advisory services firm that EquaTerra acquired in 2007.

The **EquaSiis Service Provider Performance and Satisfaction (SPPS)** study program surveys and interviews buyers that are currently engaged in outsourcing efforts with leading service providers in each market segment and geography. Only key outsourcing decision makers – CXO's and their direct reports – are targeted in the study. The research provides direct insights into buyer opinions on service provider performance levels, and also assesses and interprets general outsourcing market trends.

LJ: What is the business model for this new venture?

RW: EquaSiis is a standalone company but one with close ties to EquaTerra. Insights can employ and leverage EquaTerra knowledge, advisors and expertise to complement and extend its own dedicated resources, tools and capabilities. We offer a wide range of services with a flexible delivery model that includes “per drink” offerings, project-based, subscription and retainer based services. We can customize offerings, delivery models and services to meet specific client requirements. This is especially valuable under current challenging market conditions.

LJ: How does EquaSiis differentiate its product/offering?

RW: EquaSiis can bring to bear its own market experts and also leverage the expertise of EquaTerra. Together, we represent a pool of over 300 seasoned consultants. Collectively, our experts have advised buyers on thousands of major shared services sourcing and outsourcing deals worth billions of contract dollars. Our combined knowledge spans a broad range of deal types, functional sourcing areas, industries and geographies.

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Our SPPS market study results also provide insights into buying patterns and service provider capabilities unmatched in the industry. EquaSiis possess an extensive database of market and deal engagement data as well as results from extensive and ongoing EquaTerra and EquaSiis market research efforts.

Through Enterprise, EquaSiis has the most comprehensive and scalable software suite available to support buyer and service provider outsourcing sourcing and outsourcing governance efforts. EquaTerra and EquaSiis also internally utilize Enterprise to support our own client delivery efforts.

The most powerful and unique value we can offer is our cumulative understanding of best practices from all sides of the equation including:

1. The end user/clients' view
2. An comprehensive view across all service providers' efforts
3. EquaSiis and EquaTerra collective opinion on best practices

LJ: How will perspective clients benefit from this new offering from EquaTerra?

RW: EquaTerra has always taken the approach that an outsourcing effort between a buyer and a service provider is a collaborative business relationship, more akin to a long term relationship than a traditional procurement and supplier management effort. Cooperation and collaboration between a buyer and outsourcing provider, structured around a sound business case and solid service level and contractual model, is the key to outsourcing success. As such, EquaTerra has always felt it was in the best interest of its clients and the industry as a whole to work to improve the individual and collective capabilities of service providers in the market.

EquaSiis Insights has taken this philosophy to the next level through the creation of a separate and distinct company and set of offerings delivered by Insights to help service providers improve their capabilities. Through this approach EquaSiis has developed an economic model that supports spending greater time and resources helping service providers while at the same time ensuring the integrity, confidentiality and unbiased credentials of the EquaTerra advisory and consulting business.

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On the software side with EquaSiis Enterprise it was important to separate this unit into a standalone software business. This highlights the long term commitment EquaTerra and EquaSiis has to the software business. It also better enables EquaSiis to make the investments required to continue to build out the capabilities of the Enterprise platform and ecosystem on a global scale and across all functional outsourcing areas serving both buyers and service providers.

LJ: How many users are there taking advantages of this new service and what have been their reactions?

RW: If you take into account our research, training and market studies, Insights has well over 100 provider clients participating in various programs. In the last two quarters, Insights has also been engaged by over a dozen top tier service provider clients for unique and/or customized engagements.

New clients have been most responsive to the flexibility of the Insights' offerings as well as the strong credentials that Insights with EquaTerra bring to the table. The best indication we can share regarding client reactions is that that all of our clients are renewing and/or increasing their level of engagement with Insights.

The EquaSiis SPPS market research program is now in its seventh year. Through this program EquaSiis has analyzed thousands of outsourcing engagements and created hundreds of service provider profiles. Results have been taken back to thousands of buyers and a high majority of the top regional, Indian-based and multinational outsourcing service providers are members of the in-depth research results program. Although we continue to make improvements, the feedback we have heard from our clients (buy side and sell side) is that this program offers the most factual set of comparison data available in the outsourcing marketplace. The number of participants and longevity of the study certify the value to our clients.

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LJ: You have held a lot of different roles with firms such as Arthur Andersen, LeapSource and Creditek, what has made you successful?

RW: Most people who have worked with me can validate that I am very passionate and energetic at whatever endeavor I am working. The characteristics I value most in people are hopefully the characteristics that have helped me be successful which include honesty, respect and a positive attitude. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with very intelligent and successful people throughout my career. I believe that constant exposure to leaders in this industry has helped cultivate my adaptability and entrepreneurial drive.

“ Individual efforts and heroism is not sustainable and/or cannot be leveraged”

Finally, two of the most important things that I have learned are that you must be a part of a good team and always maintain a strong personal network. Individual efforts are not sustainable and cannot be leveraged. A strong network takes time and effort but ultimately enables you to be a part of a good team.

Integrated Search Solutions Group

We are a retainer based executive search firm with over a decade of experience in successfully attracting top talent in the areas of Outsourcing (IT, BPO and BPM), Consulting (Strategy & Technology) and traditional corporate functions (CIO, CTO, CFO, etc). We have worked effectively with major corporations as well as venture capitalized start-ups. Executive recruiters typically pride themselves in their ability to recruit top executives, irrespective of the industry. Leaders tell us a different story; they value what we do because we understand their business.

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